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# MAIN STREET MESSENGER

WINTER 2008

## New Main Street Communities Announced

At a special ceremony held in Des Moines, on March 4, Lt. Governor Patty Judge announced that four Iowa communities were recently selected to join the Main Street Iowa program: Belle Plaine, Mount Vernon, Washington and Woodbine.

"Iowa's historic main streets are the heart and soul of our communities," said Lt. Governor Judge.



Lt. Governor Patty Judge

"This is why increasing the number of Main Street communities in Iowa is a top priority of the Culver/Judge Administration. We will continue to do whatever we can to keep Iowa's downtowns strong and vibrant for business owners, workers, residents and visitors. I am pleased to welcome each of these communities into the Main Street family and wish them much success in the future."

For more than 20 years, the Main Street Iowa program and its communities have been looked upon as the "best of the best" in a national effort to revitalize downtowns across the country. The addition of these new communities brings the total number of Main Street communities in Iowa to 39.

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## Main Street is Goin' Green!

The latest buzz around the water cooler is the need to "go green." The Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) has heard the call!

Beginning with the newly established Green Streets initiative in the Community Development Division, environmental responsibility, going green and creating sustainable communities are quickly becoming the guiding principles of everything we do. This, of course, is in addition to smart growth and battling urban sprawl that have been Main Street mantras for more than two decades.



Kermit the Frog lamented "It's not easy being green", way back in 1970. While every aspect of becoming greener may not be easy, it certainly is NOT impossible and it IS extremely important. It just takes some forethought, creativity, and most of all, a willingness to get away from the mindset "because that's the way it's always been done."

What changes can you expect from Main Street Iowa? What exactly does this green focus mean to you? The short answer is that the primary goal of the MSI staff is for Iowa to have the #1 green Main Street

program in the United States. Here's how we plan to get started...

- Over the next several months, IDIED will use more and more electronic communication, slowly phasing out most printed materials. Our first step is to move to electronic distribution of the Main Street Messenger. This is the last issue that will be printed and mailed. Visit [www.iowalifechanging.com/subscriptions/login.asp](http://www.iowalifechanging.com/subscriptions/login.asp) then click on the "Register Now" link to register for IDIED list serve. Once your account is created, simply login and choose the IDIED communications you wish

to receive - make sure to check the Main Street Messenger publication, then click on "Update" to update your profile and you're all set!

- Training sessions, events and conferences will be planned with a focus on reducing waste and

incorporating as many "green" best practices as possible. Marketing materials will be distributed electronically and online registration will replace printed and mailed registration forms. We will also encourage participants attending MSI events to carpool by providing an electronic contact list of people who are attending so you can arrange to ride with someone from your community or area. What a great way to catch up with old friends or make new ones!

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# Executive Director Spotlight Main Street Waterloo

Meet Terry Poe Buschkamp. Terry has been the Executive Director of Main Street Waterloo since 1999 and became a Certified Main Street Manager in 2003.

Terry is not a native Iowan, born in Wisconsin, the daughter of a preacher, she and her family moved around the Midwest finally landing in Iowa. Terry states that she can't imagine ever leaving Iowa, especially since her daughter and son-in-law relocated to Iowa when they started thinking about raising their family and her son is close by in Chicago.

When asked to share her passion for Main Street, she said, "My job description is whatever it takes to make downtown Waterloo a better place to live, work and conduct business. We have enjoyed some successes, and that makes my work more fun. I'm in this with Waterloo for the long haul. Prior to this position I was Executive Director for one of four organizations that joined together to form Main Street Waterloo. Leadership of those four organizations agreed that the Main Street program and the Four

Point Approach® was a better approach for downtown revitalization."

For fun, Terry enjoys spending time with her family and traveling to anywhere with sunshine, a beach and the ocean. By the time you are reading this article, she will have recently returned from trips to Washington D.C. and St. Thomas.

Her resumé includes a long list of leadership positions, special training and recognition, and awards received. A new event called Taste of 'Loo gave her a chance to carry out some of her favorite activities: being creative, developing new events and working on new ideas. She also possesses a talent many people don't know about — she can sing! And, evidently her colleagues had a hard time keeping her in her seat during a Gershwin performance at the Ford Theatre in D.C. during one visit there. She said to ask Dan LoBianco about that one!

During her involvement in downtown development, Terry has witnessed and helped lead tremendous change.



Terry Poe Buschkamp, Executive Director,  
Main Street Waterloo

Several years ago, many windows were covered with paper and a Wall Street Journal article included some disparaging remarks about downtown Waterloo. She said "When you see something every day, day after day, it's not easy to see all the improvements, but when you look back, the changes certainly are drastic."

Waterloo was selected as a Main Street community in 1996. Since then, 249 buildings have been renovated; nearly \$25 million in private dollars has been invested in rehabilitation; 87 buildings have been sold for a total investment of more than \$18.7 million in downtown property acquisition. In excess of 44,000 hours, valued at almost \$833,000, have been contributed by more than 300 volunteers who share and support the vision of a fantastic downtown.

"We have so many great things happening right now, it would be hard for me to pick one vs. the other", Terry said. "You have to come to downtown Waterloo to see the changes. People who have not been in downtown Waterloo lately, have not been in downtown Waterloo."

For more information on downtown Waterloo revitalization, contact Terry at [tpb@mainstreetwaterloo.org](mailto:tpb@mainstreetwaterloo.org) or 319.291.2038.



# Main Street is Goin' Green!

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- We'll be raising our expectations for communities and businesses to incorporate environmentally responsible and sustainable methods and materials into revitalization efforts. Not only will higher standards be included in our recommendations, but technical assistance and training will be provided to support your efforts. Check out the Design Notebook on page four for some great ideas on how you can get started saving the planet!
- A couple of other things still under consideration include incentives and special recognition awards for communities and downtown businesses that increase their energy efficiency, decrease their carbon footprint and keep useful materials out of the landfill. If you have other suggestions, please let us know!



While we understand that the primary focus of downtown preservation is protecting the assets of the past, we also know there are thousands of ways each one of us can help guard the future by reducing, reusing and recycling items we use in every day life starting TODAY! For specific ideas, check out the "Green Living Guide" or "Building Green Guide for Professionals" available from the National Resources Defense Council: [www.nrdc.org/greenliving](http://www.nrdc.org/greenliving). Need more ideas? Just do a Google search for "going green" and millions of articles pop up.

The simple change from printed to electronic distribution for the Main Street Messenger saves more than just paper. Think of what it takes to create the printed newsletter - trees have to be harvested, then processed into paper, then transported to print facilities where more chemicals are introduced and more

landfill waste created from the print process. The printed piece is then addressed and prepared for mailing, dropped off with the postal service where postage cost is added to cover the cost of delivery. Our monetary and environmental footprint for this newsletter is drastically reduced when we go from writing-to-design/layout-to you. We save fuel, reduce emissions, landfill deposits are less, and you still get great information.

Thank you in advance for supporting our efforts and for visiting [www.iowalifechanging.com/subscriptions/login.asp](http://www.iowalifechanging.com/subscriptions/login.asp) to register your profile on the IDED list serve to receive your future electronic issues of Main Street Messenger.

Now, think of ways you can make a difference for your Main Street environment... and beyond!

## NEW STAFF FOR MSI

Deb Hamilton is the latest in a long line of bright, young and extremely gifted design interns to spend time as part of the Main Street Iowa staff. She has unlimited graphic design and art talent, expert computer skills and an enthusiasm for getting the job done quickly and efficiently.

Deb holds an Associates of Art degree from North Iowa Area Community College, Mason City, and will graduate in April from Grand View College, Des Moines, with a 4.0 grade point average.



Deb Hamilton joined the MSI staff in January

Deb's feet hit the ground running when she joined the Main Street staff and her design work is already showcased on the Main Street Iowa Awards ceremony pieces...you may have already seen the invitations and there is more to come!

Interested in photography and shopping...she also loves sports, especially sand volleyball and slow pitch softball. Originally from Latimer, Iowa, she hopes to land a job (and a place to live!) in Des Moines following graduation.

Please join us in welcoming Deb to Main Street Iowa! To contact her email [deb.hamilton@iowalifechanging.com](mailto:deb.hamilton@iowalifechanging.com) or call 515.242.4865.



# What does it mean to be green?

This is the first in a series of articles that will address the relationship of green, sustainable design and living to downtown revitalization. This overview will introduce many of the topics that will be looked at in more detail in future issues of the Main Street Messenger.

The ability for Iowa's communities to sustain is vital for the survival of the state's unique character, charm and architectural legacy. One way that this more sustainable future can be realized is through the "greening" of Iowa's existing building stock and new construction building practices.

After browsing through a hardware store, big box retailer or even watching the evening news, most are overwhelmed with the wide array of green products and information on the market. With this information and product overload, it can be very easy to think that being green is a difficult thing to do.

At its core, being green simply means building, living and operating in ways that reduces our impact on the environment and our natural resources. From the way we renovate our buildings to the cleaning products we buy; nearly all aspects of our lives can be affected by the greening of our state.

The modern green movement hit the limelight with concerns of global warming and climate change looming over our next generation and the release of Al Gore's documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, which helped shift the idea of climate change from a strictly political issue to a widespread moral responsibility.



Green thinking can be broken down into four areas:

1. **Energy Efficiency** – the reduction of energy usage by systems, buildings and their operations.
2. **Indoor Air Quality** – improving the living environment of indoor spaces in order to promote healthy living and productive working environments.
3. **Resource Conservation** – preserving natural resources by reducing, reusing, recycling or utilizing rapidly renewable resources.
4. **Green Living** – changing our way of life to help protect the natural environment. This can range from buying local, organic, or recycled products to behavioral changes that will reduce our impact on the environment.

To truly begin to embrace the green movement, a series of changes in thought must occur both at the community and personal levels. First, a technological change must take place. This involves learning about and implementing new technologies intended to lower energy costs and create safer living environments as well as working to further conserve our precious natural resources.

A second change is a behavioral change. This entails a shift in our personal habits and behaviors that, when done collectively, can create a great reduction in our nation's energy consumption. Some simple behavioral changes to implement immediately are remembering to turn the lights off as you leave the room or unplugging electronics when not in use; even when turned off, many electronic devices still use a trickle of electricity.

The third change involves changing how we do business and encompasses the idea of living green. Changing the way we do business should force us to evaluate the products we buy, where

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# NEW MAIN STREET COMMUNITIES ANNOUNCED

*Continued from page 1*

"In their applications and presentations, the selected communities demonstrated strong partnerships, a high level of volunteerism, and a commitment to the revitalization of their downtown districts. We are confident that these four cities will thrive and grow for many years to come," said Michael Tramontina, director of the Iowa Department of Economic Development.

A few thoughts from local leaders:

**Belle Plaine** (pop. approx. 2,800): "The fact that Main Street Iowa is a nationally recognized program, I hope will build community pride and spread good-will



Belle Plaine

throughout, while we move forward with what it is all about; economic development through historic preservation," said Bill Daily, city administrator for the City of Belle Plaine. "The best thing I anticipate about being a Main Street Iowa community is the structure and accountability that the program brings to the table."

**Mount Vernon** (pop. approx. 4,200): "Mount Vernon is in a good position to learn and grow from the Main Street program. Having recently combined the Chamber of Commerce, Marketing and Tourism Board and the Economic Development group into one team of dedicated volunteers, we're hoping the guidance provided by Main Street consultants and services will enable us to accomplish much more than we've been able to in the past," said Rich Herrmann,



Mount Vernon

President, Mount Vernon-Lisbon Community Development Board.

"We are excited to become a part of this successful program, and believe our volunteers are ready for such a journey."

**Washington** (pop. approx. 7,000): "In the short-term we are excited about facilitating a common voice and vision between the downtown businesses, building owners, and residents," said Susan Wellington, executive director of the Washington

Chamber of Commerce.

"In the long-term we look forward to



Washington

maintaining a downtown district that is a source of pride for the Washington community."

**Woodbine** (pop. approx. 1,600): "On behalf of Woodbine we are very pleased

to be selected as a Main Street Iowa community," said Roger Kenkel, President, Woodbine Community Betterment & Development Corp. (WCBDC) & EVP, Farmers Trust & Savings Bank. "The Main Street Iowa program generated enthusiasm and brought forth volunteers in Woodbine and as a community I feel we can preserve, restore and revitalize our downtown area, create some jobs, business opportunities and enjoy the process. I expect the program to be a true success."



Woodbine

Becoming a designated Main Street Iowa community is no easy task. Community representatives must attend rigorous training sessions before even being eligible to apply. They must demonstrate support from local organizations, businesses and lawmakers; funding and in-kind support must be secured and documented; strategic plans outlining short- and long-term goals must be in place; city resolutions and historic preservation ordinances must be passed and signed. Most importantly, community

officials, business owners and volunteers must agree to work together with the common goals of 1) preserving Iowa's historic buildings and unique downtown

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# What does it mean to be green?

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we buy these products and how they affect not only the natural environment but also our indoor environment.

So, why go green? There are a number of benefits. From a property owner standpoint, going green can lower utility bills, reduce operating and maintenance cost, create a healthier and more productive living and working environment and increase resale potential just to name a few.

Taking a more macro view, the greening of a community can enhance community pride, demonstrate environmental leadership, further preserve local quality of life, improve air, soil and water quality, reduce local energy consumption, lower waste going to landfills, and create unique marketing potential for community and business recruitment and retention.

As preservationist Carl Elefante once said, "The greenest building is the one that is already built." With this in mind, historic preservation lends itself to the green movement in many ways. Most directly, rehabilitating buildings on Main Street recycles the entire building, retains the use of the infrastructure that already exists in the community, enhances local quality of life and dramatically reduces the amount of demolition and construction waste that enters our landfills. Focusing development in our downtowns also promotes smart, compact growth that can curb the expansion of sprawl and aid in the preservation of Iowa precious farmland and open vistas.

One of the most important elements to remember for greening Iowa's Main Streets is that every building is not going to be totally overhauled to create the greenest, most energy efficient building in the state. Instead, property owners should look at a series of simple steps they can do to create a more efficient building; "grab the low hanging fruit." It will be the combination of each property owner's small steps in a downtown area that can begin to make a difference in the community, region, and state. We will take a more in depth look at specific strategies to greening your Main Street building in future issues.

#### **FURTHER READING:**

- National Trust for Historic Preservation's Sustainability Initiative:  
[www.nationaltrust.org/green](http://www.nationaltrust.org/green)
- ENERGY STAR Program:  
[www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)
- GreenBuilding.com:  
[www.buildinggreen.com](http://www.buildinggreen.com)

# NEW MAIN STREET COMMUNITIES ANNOUNCED

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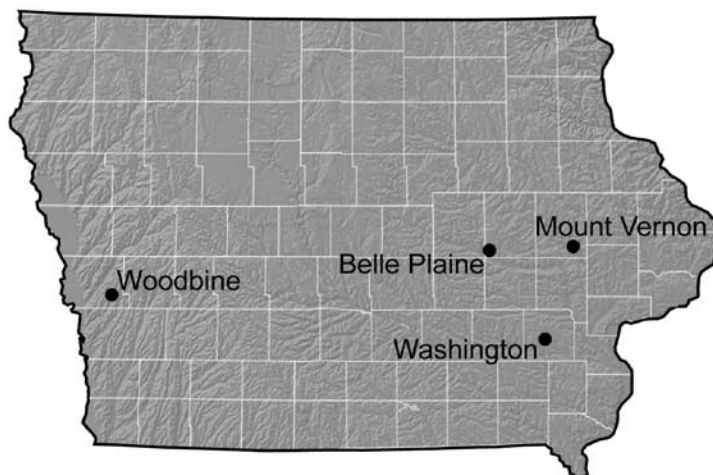
business districts, and 2) improving the local economy by adopting and following the Main Street Four Point Approach® to downtown revitalization.

While becoming a Main Street community may be challenging, designated communities reap many benefits. During the first three years of the program each community receives 40 days of on-site training and technical assistance from Main Street Iowa, National Main Street Center staff and private consultants, as well as 30 days of training for volunteers and local staff, resulting in a state investment of \$100,000. Main Street communities each receive continuing training valued at \$10,000 annually.

Over the years, by working together with the state, Main Street Iowa communities have realized the benefits of more than 1.5 million hours of volunteer time committed to improving their city centers, a significantly increased job and business base and millions of dollars in private investment to purchase, construct and rehabilitate downtown property.

For more information visit:

[www.iowalifechanging.com/community/mainstreetiowa](http://www.iowalifechanging.com/community/mainstreetiowa),  
e-mail: [mainstreet@iowalifechanging.com](mailto:mainstreet@iowalifechanging.com),  
or call 515.242.4756.



*For more on all*

*Main Street Iowa communities visit*

*[www.iowalifechanging.com/community/mainstreetiowa](http://www.iowalifechanging.com/community/mainstreetiowa)*

# Marketing Study and Grant Produced Results!

Once upon a time — it was in the fall of 2006 to be exact — 13 Main Street Iowa communities completed a market analysis process, which resulted in each community receiving a comprehensive market study report and site visit by Jay Schlinsog of the Downtown Professionals Network.

At the time the communities signed on to participate, no one was aware there would be funding available from MSI to help institute some of the recommendations outlined in the report. Each community that completed the process was invited to apply for a \$5,000 grant, which required a minimum local match of \$2,500; half cash and half in-kind. Here's what occurred:

- Participating communities: Bloomfield; Charles City; Greenfield; Iowa Falls; Keokuk; Mt. Pleasant; New Hampton; Osceola; Sac City; Sigourney; State Center; Waterloo and Valley Junction-West Des Moines
- Total investment by Main Street Iowa: \$65,000
- Total local cash match: \$205,248
- Total local in-kind contributions: \$65,609

One community reported that a relatively low number of their downtown businesses utilize the Internet. In another, consumers indicated very strong demand for additional retail, specifically clothing and shoes. Many commented that there is a lack of knowledge of the benefits of historic preservation and that educating building and business owners is the key to improving downtown business districts. One community was surprised to find out their district was projected to grow in population and they needed to focus more marketing efforts on younger, more affluent individuals and families.

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## Main Street Iowa Impact — July 1986 - December 2007

These statistics are used to show the economic impact monitored in Iowa Main Street downtowns. Success of the Main Street Program cannot be measured by numbers alone. Cumulative figures are condensed from reports submitted by each local Main Street Program director. Each community's population, size of project area and local priorities vary. Cumulative Totals:

Total number of volunteer hours:	1,533,350
Net gain of new businesses:	3,027
Number of building rehabs/sales:	9,505
Net gain of new jobs:	8,588
Total private dollars invested into downtown buildings:	\$678,744,779

## BITS & PIECES

**MAIN STREET AWARDS** — We hope you plan to attend the annual Main Street Awards banquet at the Downtown Des Moines Marriott on April 18. **REGISTRATION DEADLINE: APRIL 9.** Contact the Main Street Iowa office at [mainstreet@iowalifechanging.com](mailto:mainstreet@iowalifechanging.com) or 515.242.4759 if you have questions or need a reservation form.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

- June 28 is the deadline for entering the Iowa State Fair's downtown photo contest so keep your camera handy! For more information or to register visit: [www.iowastatefair.org/fair.php](http://www.iowastatefair.org/fair.php)

- August 7-17, "U Gotta Love It!" is the 2008 Iowa State Fair theme.



- August 26 & 27, the 2008 Downtown Summit will be held in Charles City. Sustainability and "green" practices will be the emphasis this year. If you have questions, please contact Debi Flanders at [debi.flanders@iowalifechanging.com](mailto:debi.flanders@iowalifechanging.com) or 515.242.4734 or visit [www.iowalifechanging.com/community/mainstreetiowa/2008summit.html](http://www.iowalifechanging.com/community/mainstreetiowa/2008summit.html)
- October 28 & 29, the Iowa Conference on Volunteer Service and Nonprofit Management will be held in Ames. A partnership between the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service and the Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center promises to result in a conference that's bigger and better than ever! For more information, contact Karen Crosby at [karen.crosby@iowalifechanging.com](mailto:karen.crosby@iowalifechanging.com) or 515.242.4798. Details will be posted at [www.volunteeriowa.org](http://www.volunteeriowa.org) as they are confirmed.

# ***DON'T FORGET!***

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## ***Marketing Study and Grant Produced Results***

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Action Steps Completed:

- Market study summary was shared with existing business and property owners.
- Numerous training and informational sessions were offered to help local business owners understand the recommendations contained in the market study.
- A DVD business recruitment package was developed and distributed.
- Business Visitation programs were started and downtown inspection tours were conducted.
- New logos and branding marketing materials, including exhibit booths, folders, an historic preservation education newspaper insert, and seasonal banners, were developed and utilized.
- One clever downtown product guide was developed to market the downtown as a shopping mall.
- Websites were developed or revamped.
- Mini-grants were provided for sign, awning, and paint updates.
- Welcome signs, directional signs, park benches and litter receptacles were purchased and installed.
- “Main Street Opportunity” signs were created to be loaned to property owners with buildings for lease or sale.
- New partnerships were formed to help promote the entire community.

The moral of this story is that sometimes it's okay to do something important “just because.” Don't decide to do something only because there is money involved. Think about your community's needs, develop strategies to meet those needs, and then you can begin to figure out where the money will come from.